

REMARKS

The Office Action dated October 10, 2003 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. Claims 2, 4-8 and 10 remain pending and are submitted for reconsideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge the allowance of claims 2 and 10 and the indication that claim 8 contains allowable subject matter.

Claim Rejections

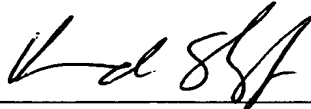
Claims 4-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,275,146 (Kithil) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,366,200 (Aoki). The rejection should be withdrawn because Aoki cannot preclude patentability of the claimed invention pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(c). Aoki qualifies as prior art under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e). Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(c), Aoki cannot preclude patentability because at the time the invention was made (i.e., the filing date of February 8, 2001 or the priority dates of February 11, 14 or 16, 2000) both the present application and Aoki were owned by the same person or subject to an obligation of assignment to the same person (i.e., Takata Corporation). The assignment for the present application is recorded at the United States Patent and Trademark Office at Reel/Frame 011632/0606. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 4-7 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would expedite allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 12/8/03

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SHOULD ADDITIONAL FEES BE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FILING OF THIS PAPER, OF IF A PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME IS REQUIRED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF SAME, THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741 FOR ANY SUCH FEES; AND APPLICANT(S) HEREBY PETITION FOR ANY NEEDED EXTENSION OF TIME.